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ABSTRACT

This study measures changes over nearly thirty years in the amount of aid provided by state governments to public libraries and the relationship of these changes to the party in power. Aid is examined at two levels: the first views the party in power at the inception of state aid the second notes the party when a significant increase is made in aid levels. Neither condition produces a definitive relationship to the party in power as defined by the study, and progress in aid seems nearly evenly divided between the ascendant parties, or at least in proportion to the dominant party across the United States at the time. The study does reveal a regional correlation to arbitrary groupings of the states into the Northeast, South, Midwest, and West and it tends to show that the more urban and populous the state, the greater is the legislative and executive support for such aid. Future analyses will move beyond the two valued party in power variable to examine the personalities of the governor, state librarians, and peculiar economic and educational situations and their relationship to legislative action or nonaction as regards library support at the state level. (RAA)

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Party-in-Power as a Determinant of State Aid to Public Libraries

an investigation by

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Objectives of the Study

This is a longitudinal study, measuring change over nearly thirty years in the amount of state aid, if any, provided by the state governments to public libraries in the contiguous 48 United States. Of particular notice is party-in-power at the time of the inception or increasing of aid levels in a significant amount, as well as differences in regions among the states. Previous experimentation has shown that there is a marked, but not uniformly predictable, difference in the regions insofar as their state legislatures indicate willingness to commit sums of money to programs of grants in aid for library programs and support.[1]

Party-in-power is defined, for the purposes of this study, as the political party of the state's governor at a particular point in time, sampled every two years since 1949, as reported by consecutive biennial editions of The Book of the States.[2] Party-in-power is considered to be a meaningful variable in state spending decisions for the following reasons:

State aid for libraries is initiated as a request for funding by the State Library Agency, which becomes, without exception, the disbursement agency for whatever funding is granted. For such money to become available, legislative action is necessary. Normally, such action comes about as the result of a vigorous program of lobbying, argument and pointing to what other states are doing for their libraries. It is demonstrable, however, that very few bills become law, and in the specific case, few states enact library aid legislation, without the consent and signature of the governor. The governor's veto is thus the single most potent legislative force extant.

Regardless of the predominant majority party in either house of the state legislature, it is the governor's office which can permit, deny, encourage or retard the institution and furtherance, even on an extremely modest scale, of state aid for libraries. An appropriate question, therefore, is, what happens when the governor is of one party and the two legislative houses are of the opposition? The Book of the States for 1974/75 presents data which indicate that the configuration is as follows:

Table 1

Party Affiliations of Governors and Both Legislative Houses in the fifty United States, 1973.

States with governor and both houses of same party	25	50 %
States with governor of one party and houses split	3	6 %
States with governor of one party and both houses of other	17	34 %
States with governor of one party, one house same, one even	2	4 %
States excluded from study (Nebraska has a unicameral legislature; Alaska and Hawaii entered the Union too late to be counted)		

What becomes clear is that a legislative veto can devastate legislative bills and proposals in virtually all states. A curious footnote reveals that in one state, and only one, the governor has no veto power. All others permit the executive office to thwart the express wishes of the legislatures, unless they vote to override, which is analyzed in Table 2.

Table 2

Legislative Votes Requisite to Passing Bills Over Governor's Veto, 50 states, 1973

Majority of elected members	6 states	12 %
Three-quarters of elected members	1 state	2 %
Two-thirds of elected members	23 states	46 %
Three-fifths of elected members	5 states	10 %
Two-thirds of members present	13 states	26 %
Three-fifths of members present	1 state	2 %
No veto possible	1 state	2 %

Therefore, in all but one state, the governor may block legislation he/she does not wish passed, and in 86 % of cases, the legislators would have to drum up 60 % of all votes to override. In 76 % of states, even more interesting, it takes a minimum of two-thirds to pass over the governor's objection, and actual practice shows that library legislation at the state level has almost never passed without the tacit or explicit consent of the chief administrative officer.

Background And Related Studies

Ladenson[3] in St. Angelo, et al., traces state aid to libraries all the way back to a New York act of 1838. Meaningful amounts of state aid, however, were not granted until the Great Depression of the 1930's, when Ohio (in 1935) and Michigan (two years later) enacted laws providing for what amounted to state-level bailouts of local governments in providing library service. St Angelo[4] adds that,

> One major change in the total responsibility and in the direct relationships with public libraries (of state government) came when state agencies were charged with the administration of state aid monies for the development of public libraries. Such aid became available in the 1930's in a few states and in varying amounts....During the thirties, a long-lasting depression had reduced public expenditures, while at the same time unemployment and other major dislocations had caused millions of people to seek aid from such educational and public agencies as libraries. This huge demand, more prominent in metropolitan areas, led state legislatures, hard presced to find funds for all state responsibilities, nevertheless, to devote some monies for public library expansion.

Analysis shows , even as recently as 1977, the tendency of populous states to support aid for libraries while less crowded states did not. In that year, seven of the ten most populous states were among the top ten in distribution of state aid, while the ten states highest in aid levels are all within the eighteen most populous states. It is interesting to note, however, that when per capita statistics are drawn, the differences are far less significant. New York, which offers far-and-away the most money for libraries, contributes approximately 72¢ per person, while West Virginia, comparatively small in population, spreads its money ($2 million a year) over its libraries ~~residents~~ at the rate of $1.08 per capita.

One assumption of the author, at the outset of this study, was that federal aid created state aid, at least in some measure, as a result of matching provisions in the acts of the federal government. This proved not to be the case, however, as no connection is descernible between the 1956 Library Services Act, which first made federal money available to state governments for the purposes of library support, and its successor, the Library Services and Construction Act (1964) which added buildings to the permissible list of purposes for expenditure of federal funds, and any sudden upsurge in inceptions of library aid or increments in aid levels in the states. Clearly, other triggers were causing states to behave in this manner, and party-in-power was selected as a promising variable to work with.

Library service historically has been seen as a natural concern of state government only insofar as it has been perceived generally as educational. All state legislatures willingly support a percentage of education costs for the young, generally dividing the burden with the local governments as a matter of course. Libraries have striven arduously to create, in the collective legislative mind, the impression that they, too, are educational, and thus deserving of state support at levels approaching one-half the total cost of their operation. Unfortunately, it is obvious that the educational purpose of the public library is so confused in the minds of legislators with the more visible recreational function that they may vote down state aid measures with clear consciences.

In 1949, 22 states were making contributions to grants-in-aid programs for public libraries, although only 13 of them were in amounts of $100,000 or more, and none of them were in amounts of one million dollars. By 1959, 23 states were contributing (a gain of one, attained by five inceptions and four discontinuances during the ten-year period) showing virtually little progress, despite the Library Services Act. By 1969, thirty states were contributing to library services, with 25 of them exceeding an arbitrary test of minimum significance, $100,000 per year. By 1977, 38 states were on the bandwagon, with almost all amounts 'significant', thirteen states providing at least $2 million a year. It is here that the regional effect of state aid becomes noticeable, as Table 3 shows:

Table 3

States providing aid to libraries/states providing over $100,000 per year, by region, 1949, 1959, 1969, 1977.

Region Year	1949	1959	1969	1977
Northeast	9/4	9/4	11/8	10/9
South	8/5	7/4	9/9	11/11
Midwest	3/3	4/4	5/5	9/9
West	2/1	3/1	5/3	8/6
U.S. average region	5.5/3.3	5.5/3.3	7.5/6.2	9.5/8.8

What the table shows is that the states' perceptions would seem to undergo change as a function of regionalism, as evidenced by the pattern of Northeastern and Southern states to enact and continue such aid while Western states, until quite recently, were not interested in it.

It may be seen, therefore, that regionalism has a role to play in the pattern of state library aid provision. It may, in fact, be a better determinant, as party-in-power rests for its validity upon certain assumptions about the behavior of Democrats and Republicans. In the conventional wisdom, we expect Democrats to favor more social programs, go into deficit spending, fund education, etc. Republicans are thought to be the party of government non-intervention, low taxes and a favorable business climate. What, therefore is one to do with the information that Nelson Rockefeller was a Republican and innumerable southern governors were Democrats, and what is one to make of California's present administrator, Governor Brown? All this is only by way of pointing out that labels such as "Democrat" and "Republican" are ambiguous and often misleading, and may be on their way to losing all their meaning as the political system evolves. The only certainty is that different incumbents feel differently about social programs, education and libraries, and that personality, funds to work with, and influence over the legislature are the only true determinants of aid levels in government.

Monypenny, however, reinforces the contention that the office of the governor is influential in the funding of state service levels, both due to the veto power possible and the influence wielded in the legislature by his/her recommendations. For the governor to make libraries an important plank in his/her legislative program, library leaders have to be extraordinarily good at what they do, effective lobbyists, or fortunate in having their state elect a library-leaning executive. The governor's neutrality, states Monypenny, is a minimum condition for a successful campaign to institute or raise significantly the level of state aid for libraries. The placement of the state-level agency charged with promotion of libraries is important, as well, but while there is fragmentary evidence to support the idea that placement under the state's department of education is advantageous, detractors suggest that the library agency will enact more legislative programs of aid if it remains independent of the education umbrella.

Perhaps the saving grace of the State Library and its programs is that it makes such a comparatively modest demand on the resources of the state. A state finding itself urged or pressured to enact aid legislation can appease the library-backers within its borders for a million dollars or so, without taking an inordinate amount away from other programs.

For a look at the extent to which the states fund and have funded library programs, Table 4 presents a regional breakdown of aid levels:

Table 4

States providing Grants-in-Aid to Public Libraries, 1959 and 1977, by Regional Groupings

	1959					1977				
	TOTAL	NE	S	MW	W	Total	NE	S	MW	W
no aid	25	5	3	8	9	10	2	1	3	4
under $100,000 per year	9	5	3	0	1	3	1	0	0	2
$100,000 to $500,000	9	3	3	2	1	8	1	1	2	4
$500,000 to $1,000,000	2	0	0	2	0	8	2	3	2	1
$1,000,000 to $5,000,000	2	1	1	0	0	12	2	6	3	1
over $5,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	2	2	0

When the figures above are subjected to regional analysis into four geographical groupings, it becomes plain that in both 1959 and 1977, the West and Midwest lagged behind the two geographically eastern regions in the provision of state aid to libraries. In 1959, only two states provided over one million dollars annually for libraries, one in the Northeast and one in the South. By 1977, nineteen states were over the 'one-million' mark, of which thirteen of that number were Northeastern or Southern. Therefore, despite a levelling tendency by the close of the period, it is safe to say that states west of the Mississippi do not tend to favor state aid for their libraries, at least not at a level of significance. One more factor of note is that such phenomena are not correlated with personal income in the states, but may be explained somewhat by population or population density.

Methodology

This investigation looks at party-in-power as a long-term variable of significant meaning in the funding or lack of funding of state aid for libraries. Measures used are the party affiliation of the governor at two year time-periods and two indicators of aid for libraries, similarly measured biennially: inception of state aid to libraries and large-scale increments in level of such aid (hereinafter called 'quantum leaps'.)

For clarification purposes, inceptions were defined as significant sums of money ($100,000 and up) awarded to state library agencies by legislatures for the purposes of

providing assistance to public library funding in the state. Such inceptions, to be meaningful, must be sustained indefinitely or increased. A one-time funding of libraries, not reported at the next biennial interval, was not counted in the study. 'Quantum leaps' are arbitrarily defined as one of two things: 100 % or greater increases in state aid for libraries in states having little aid previously or substantial increases in states with established programs of aid. One other restriction concerns the tenant of the Governor's chair during a period of time. For purposes of this study, a succession of governors of the same political party constitutes no change, and the name of the executive does not matter; only his/her party. Finally, the regional alignment of states into four groupings, each of twelve states, is arguable[6], raising questions about the propriety of assigning, say, West Virginia to the Northeast or OKLAHOMA to the West. It is hoped that the reader will permit this classification, with the author's concession that regionalism is impossible to prove and useful only to the extent that it 'seems right' in considering the states as groups.

Results, Findings and Conclusions

The results of this longitudinal study were richly varied, and not always in keeping with previous expectations. First, the party-in-power structure over the 28 years under study was compiled:

Table 5

Average percentage of state governors belonging to Democratic party, by region, 1949-1977

year / region	1949	1951	1953	1955	1957	1959	1961	1963	1965	1967	1969	1971	1973	1975	1977
Northeast	50	42	25	58	58	42	58	67	58	58	33	33	58	75	67*
South	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	75	67	83	67	75	83
Midwest	42	42	25	33	42	75	67	67	67	50	25	67	67	50	50
West	50	17	8	38	42	58	50	33	42	8	50	50	50	92	100

* Independent is counted as Republican

Similar levels of aid from states to libraries for the same time period are:

Table 6

State governments giving grants-in-aid to libraries, by region, 1949-1977

year / region	1949	1951	1953	1955	1957	1959	1961	1963	1965	1967	1969	1971	1973	1975	1977
Northeast	4	3	3	4	4	4	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	8	10
South	6	7	4	2	3	4	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	11
Midwest	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	8	9
West	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	2	3	5	5	7	8

While it is not the contention of this paper that aid levels or inceptions for libraries are correlated somehow in a significant manner with the presence of Democratic governors in the states, several curious facts emerge from perusal of tables 5 and 6 together. It is interesting to note that, as the percentage of a region's governors increase in Democratic tenants of the office, so does percentage of states with aid. In the West, for example, it is clear that a dramatic upsurge in democratic governors [illegible], for whatever reason, by a similar growth of state aid programs. The South's consistent pattern of funding grants-in-aid programs may not be attributed to population or its density, and may thus be a result of the philosophy of Democractic governors. It is acknowledged that such correlations may be spurious, but they are interesting, nonetheless.

Turning to a specific study of signal events in states' library histories, we will now consider inceptions and quantum leaps, both defined previously. First, the ten states still (as of 1977) providing nothing for libraries were analyzed for party in power, but that availed little. Seven such states had democratic governors and the other three had republican governors, which is in rough proportion to the condition of the nation as a whole. The only interesting result of such analysis is that eight of the ten states (if one counts Louisiana as such) lie west of the Mississippi. This reinforces the regional effect of funding levels, as no aid is found in North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Iowa, Oregon, Utah and Washington, seven states west of the Mississippi, and lacking (except for Seattle) a sizeable population center. Another fact to take note of is that the two states east of the Mississippi were Vermont and New Hampshire, the least populous and least urbanized states in the area.

Table 7 deals with the aforementioned inceptions, and the governors of the states at the time.

Table 7

Initiation of state aid between 1949 and 1977, and political party of governors in the states.

region/state	year	party of governor
Northeast		
Massachusetts	1961	R
New Jersey	1961	D
West Virginia	1969	R
Midwest		
Illinois	1965	D
Indiana	1977	R
Kansas	1975	R
Minnesota	1957	D
Nebraska	1975	D
Wisconsin	1973	D

Table 7 (Continued)
Initiation of state aid between 1949 and 1977, and political party of governors of the states

region/state	year	party of governor	region/state	year	party
South			West		
Alabama	1961	D	Arizona	1971	R
Florida	1963	D	California	1965	D
Georgia	1959	D	Colorado	1963	R
Kentucky	1953	D	Idaho	1969	R
Mississippi	1973	D	Nevada	1975	D
Tennessee	1961	D	Wyoming	1977	D
Texas	1973	D			

By way of conclusion, it may be said that more Democratic governors than Republicans presided over inception of state aid, but this finding is not so startling (15 Democrats; 7 Republicans) that it can't be explained by the relative proportions of Democrats to Republicans in the American states over the time period. Regionalism has its effect, as the 'solid South' delivered seven inceptions under Democrats, while the other regions were virtually equally divided in party affiliation of governors. Therefore, party-in-power can be said to have no significant effect on state aid, and differences in the parties may be due more to geography than to any other variable.

When one considers 'quantum leaps' in state aid for libraries, however, a pattern emerges. Quantum leaps were earlier defined as at least $100,000 in a state with little previous aid to libraries, or at least a 33 % increase in aid level in a state with pre-existing amounts of money for that purpose. The leap's impact, however, is not easy to assess, as New York jumped from about $19 million to over $24 million in the biennium, 1975-1977 (a 30 % gain), while Alabama increased its aid program fivefold in the same time period, but the actual amount involved was just over one-half million dollars. Which state is better off, the one with another five million dollars to spend or the one multiplying its amount five times? This question is left for the reader to judge, but it is clear that percentage rise may not matter as much as dollars available.

Finally, it remains for us to chart the spread and distribution of these quantum leaps:

Table 8
Quantum leaps in aid levels for libraries, 1949-1977, with governor's party affiliation

year	state(s)
1949	------
1951	New York (R)
1953	------
1955	------
1957	------
1959	Georgia (D)
1961	Massachusetts (R); New York (R)
1963	Maryland (D); Pennsylvania (R); Florida (D)
1965	Arkansas (D); Kentucky (D); California (D); Illinois (D)
1967	------
1969	Massachusetts (R); New Jersey (D); South Carolina (D)
1971	New Jersey (R); North Carolina (D)
1973	Massachusetts (R); Mississippi (R); Tennessee (R); Wisconsin (D)
1975	West Virginia (R); Alabama (D); Texas (D); Kansas (R) Michigan (R); North Carolina (R); Wisconsin (D)
1977	West Virginia (D); Arkansas (D); Indiana (R); Texas (D); Michigan (R)

This amounts to 17 Democrats and 15 Republicans, which shows no trend whatsoever. When a regional breakdown of the data is accomplished, however, the results are as follows:

Table 9
Regional Distribution of Quantum Leaps in State Funding for Libraries, 1949-1977

region	number	percentage of total
Northeast	11	34 %
South	13	41 %
Midwest	7	22 %
West	1	3 %
	32	100 %

The conclusion from all this is that, while inceptions were generally spread around throughout the 28-year time period, and quantum leaps were not the exclusive province of states under either party's governor, seventy-five percent of all such leaps came in the South and Northeast regions. In the entire twelve-state Western region, only one leap (and somewhat anemic at that) was recorded when California in 1965 awarded the sum of $800,000 to its state library for disbursement to public libraries. Since that time, the amount has climbed to a sustained $1 million, and that represents, with the exception of Colorado, the extent of serious state-aid effort in the Western states to date.

Conclusions and Implications

Party-in-power is a promising variable for further scrutiny in the American states as a predictor and determinant of the inception and level of state-level aid to public libraries. Some refinement is necessary, however, and further studies of the author will explore other, more precise,variables than the two-valued party-in-power, as reasons for a state's decision to fund libraries at all, and to what extent. While income of the state or its populace does not, in broad measures, seem correlated with aid levels, population density does, and may explain why western states, with sparse populations, pay so little attention to state aid. For the time being, regionalism, the tendency of states proximate geographically to one another to behave similarly, seems the most likely (if not necessarily logical) explanation of the spending behavior of state legislatures with respect to library aid.

In future analyses, the personalities of governors, of state librarians, and the peculiar economic and educational situations of states will be explored in a continuing effort to zero in on the reason (assuming that one exists) for the legislative action or non-action as regards library support at the state level.

Notes

1. Shuman, B.A. Regionalism and the State's Concern with Public Libraries. Dissertation (unpub.) Rutgers University, 1973.
2. The Book of the States, biennial editions between 1950/51 and 1978/79. Lexington, KY. Council of State Governments. "State Library Agencies" sections.
3. Ladenson, A.D. "The Role of State Government in the Establishment, Promotion, and Support of Public Libraries" in Douglas St. Angelo (and others) State Library Policy: Its Legislative and Environmental Contexts. American Library Association, 1971 p. 10
4. St. Angelo, op. cit. pp. 3-4
5. Monypenny, P. The Library Functions of the States American Library Association, 1966. pp. 33-34
6. for discussions of regional alignment and attendant problems see: Sharkansky, I. Regionalism in American Politics, Bobbs-Merrill Press, 1970 for a general treatment and Shuman, B.A. "The State Library Agency and Administrative Placement in Government", Public Library Quarterly, 1:1 Spring, 1979.